

50 Years of Curling in Oliver

Leading up to the Oliver Curling Club's 50th Anniversary in 2020, Johanne Smith put together a series of articles that appeared in the *Oliver Daily News*. These articles, photos and links are collected here.

50TH ANNIVERSARY

April 13, 2020

<https://oliverdailynews.com/history-of-oliver-curling-club/>

A series of short articles will be published in the coming months relating the history of our community curling club.

1968 to 1970

The idea of building a curling rink in Oliver began in 1968. Many of curlers who had been participating in their favorite sport for many years in Osoyoos and Summerland felt Oliver had grown enough to have a club of their own.

A committee was formed to explore the feasibility of such an idea. The initial Society was comprised of the following members:

President: Eric Bastian

Vice-President: Dick Goodall

Secretary: Stu Mould

Treasurer: Dave Francis

Directors: Fred Fritz, Bill Andrews, Roy Becker; Mel Skaros, John Fritz, Ray, Anderson, Blaine Francis, John Loudon, Dick Topping, Joe Fefchak, Willie Nunweiler, Bob Wheeler, Ewart Bowering and others were early supporters.



Shopkeeper Sam Noel purchases first debenture

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Initially the club attempted to come to an agreement with a lodge to construct a multi-purpose facility. An agreement could not be reached and the group decided to raise funds in the community. Members who could not afford a debenture bought memberships for \$100. Members who could not afford this were able to pay \$10 monthly on instalments.

The proposal was to build a four-sheet rink that would be located adjacent to the planned skating arena.

By 1969, the Committee had sold \$52,000 in debentures and \$22,000 in memberships, and negotiated a bank loan for \$5,000. A decision was made to proceed with the planning of the building.

On April 7th, 1970 a Special Meeting was held to consider the proposed plans for the four-sheet curling rink. The proposal was approved.

Construction began 2 months later on June 5th under the supervision of Seidler Construction.

Researched and submitted by Johanne Smith

50TH ANNIVERSARY – 2nd in a series

May 2, 2020

<https://oliverdailynews.com/50th-anniversary-2nd-in-a-series/>

1970

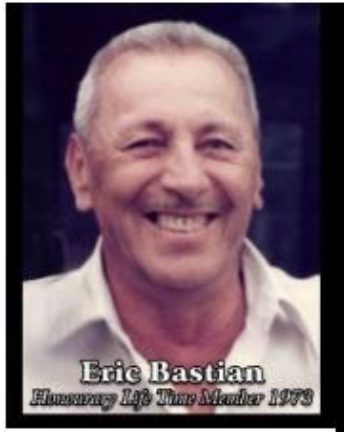
On June 4th, construction began with an estimated cost for the facility of \$84,000.

Volunteer hours totalled 10,000. Work parties began at 6:00 pm on weekdays and on weekends. The men did the general labour work and the women took on the entire job of painting the club. Not one dollar of Public Taxes money was used to build or maintain the building. The rink does stand on Town property.

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The building contractor for the project was Bill Seidler. By August, construction was well underway and the completion date was set for September.

The first ice maker hired was A.J. “Pat” Patterson, a retired Air Force Army Veteran. Pat was an enthusiastic curler and had coached at the junior and high school levels. In September, the refrigeration equipment was installed. Rocks were ordered from Scotland and were to be shipped.



The ice sheets were bare bones grey concrete block walls and an open ceiling of truss rafters. In one place on the north side, daylight could be seen through cracks in the block wall. While this had not been planned, it allowed the smoke that was vented from the lodge to escape outside (smoking still being permitted). The bleachers that are still currently used were donated by the Penticton Granite Curling Club.

It was said that the curling club was built because Eric Bastian (left) didn't know it was impossible.



In October Eric Bastian was elected First President along with a slate of officers of the Curling Club. Helen Bastian (shown left) was elected as the First President of the Ladies Club. The Ladies Club ran the concession for the club. A portion of the profits from the concession went to operating expenses.

On October 15th, the first ice was put in the curling rink. By [November], the Curling Club was in full swing.

Submitted by Johanne Smith

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Oliver Curling Club 50th Anniversary History

May 31, 2020

<https://oliverdailynews.com/by-johanne-smith/>

The story continues

November 1970 saw the official ribbon-cutting ceremony held with many dignitaries from neighboring clubs in attendance. This was the kick-off to the first Mixed Bonspiel with 40 teams in attendance from the Okanagan and Boundary Regions and as far away as Revelstoke, Trail and the Coast.



Murray Soder and Mike Firman

This had been preceded 2 weeks earlier by the first Club Mixed Bonspiel that hosted 32 teams composed of club members. The entry fee was set at \$10 per rink. The “A” team winners

appropriately were the President Eric Bastian team, which included his wife Helen with Charlie and Phyllis Miller. During the balance of the curling season, several well-attended bonspiels were held, including the Kinsman, the first Men’s Open and the first Ladies’ Open.

Of note, the club’s first 8-ender was achieved during the men’s night league by the Bob Armstrong team, which included John Rotheisler, Dave Nicholas and Ted Mickolas.

From 1970 to 1975, the club was doing so well that Awards Night was held in the Legion Hall. The club lacked the space and had insufficient chairs and tables.

In 1975, four 1000-watt heaters were installed in the corners of the ice shed, to the delight of all members, who had been grumbling about the cold.

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When the new curling season started in 1976, curlers were greeted by newly redecorated upstairs and downstairs lounges. Boards around the ice had been painted by the ladies. The upstairs lounge area had been redecorated to improve acoustics and ventilation. The walls were finished in cedar siding and the ceiling was finished in cork tiles. The President at the time Murray Soder reported that the work had been carried out by club members on a volunteer basis. In the same year, club member Dick Topping was inducted into the Canadian Curling Hall of Fame for his involvement and dedication in running the Canadian School Boy Curling Championships.

The Day League that is so popular with members today began in 1977. The avid curlers in the Oliver Club wrapped up the club's seventh year of operations with a steak dinner and awards night in their newly renovated upstairs lounge.

A new ceiling was put over the ice surface in 1981 resulting in better lighting and noise reduction. Corn brooms could be very loud.

Picture and article submitted by Johanne Smith

History – Oliver Curling Club

July 19, 2020

<https://oliverdailynews.com/history-oliver-curling-club/>

1980–1990

The two most significant things to happen were the insulation (1980) and subsequent painting (1984) of the ice shed ceiling with fire retardant paint. Previously the ceiling was just truss rafters with nothing in them. Volunteer club members rolled scaffolding on plywood sheets over the sand floor with a crew of volunteers working to install the ceiling. A Gyproc firewall was installed between the lounge area and the ice surface area. It took almost a month for volunteers working evenings and weekends to complete the job. In 1981, volunteers installed insulation on the walls of the ice shed immediately after the curling season ended. Neil Seidler of Seidler Construction was then hired to

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install the present panelling (over the insulation) that is on the walls. A year later, volunteers from the club painted the panelling.

The club's second Eight ender was scored by June James, Leonie Soder, Ida Szmata and Jackie Kilgour in 1982.



COMING THROUGH IN THE CLUTCH . . .

The sign says it all. Crafted by Jean Fry, this Oliver banner greeted Canada's newest junior ladies curling champions at the Kelowna airport Sunday night. The tired but happy team was ceremoniously paraded through the streets of Kelowna on a fire truck to a gala reception at the Kelowna Curling Club. The team made history as they captured the title. It marked the first time the junior ladies championship had been televised live and only the second time a curler,

Oliver's Julie Sutton, has won the title twice in a row. Julie cornered just about every award there was to be won coming home with the all-star skip trophy, the Most Sportsmanlike award and the Miss Congeniality award. That's Julie on the left with third Judy Wood, second Susan Auty and lead Marla Geiger of Kelowna.

In 1985 the Jodie Sutton team, Teresa Ziebart, Dawn Rubner and Chris Thompson won the Provincial High School Girls Championship. Jodie Sutton repeated this in 1986 with Julie Sutton, Dawn Rubner and Michelle Surovy. The same year, Jodie Sutton also won the Provincial Junior Ladies Championship with Julie Sutton, Dawn Rubner and Chris Thompson. The Provincial Senior Ladies Championship was won by Pearl Quintal and her team comprised of Mary Skaros, Leonie Soder and June James. The 1987 Junior Girls Provincial

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Championships again was won by Julie Sutton and her team Judy Wood, Susan Auty and Marla Geiger.

1988: Canadian Junior Women Champions Julie Sutton, Judy Wood, Susan Auty, Marla Geiger

1989: Scott Tournament of Hearts Julie Sutton, Pat Sanders, Georgina Hawkes, Melissa Soligo

1990: Senior Men's Zone George Hagel, Bob Bourgeault, Murray Soder, Doug Weeks

History summary submitted by Joanne Smith

Picture – thanks to Oliver Chronicle

The final article in the series

August 28, 2020

<https://oliverdailynews.com/the-final-article-in-the-series/>

Curling Club History

The new millennium brought the latest building upgrades that enabled the club to cement and enlarge the ice surface. International-sized ice could allow the facility to be used for practice sites for Olympians coming to B.C. The building and downstairs washrooms became wheelchair accessible.

The Town of Oliver allowed the club to have summer rental in the downstairs area for the children's Sun Fun group organized by the Parks and Rec. This helped with the club's maintenance costs.



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From 1970-2020 (approximately), improvements to the club cost \$150,000 in cash and \$150,000 in sweat equity by the hard-working members.

Over 50 years, it is estimated that approximately 20,000 men and ladies from all parts of the Interior and the Coast were entertained by participating in our Men's, Ladies and Mixed Bonspiels.

In addition, for more than 20 years, the Knights of Columbus, Kinsmen, Legion and Heart and Stroke organizations had annual bonspiels that entertained an additional 5,000-plus curlers. BC Tel and West Kootenay Power also had their weekend bonspiel at our club for many years.

The club has provided an estimated 10,000 person years of winter recreation through our club leagues during the regular season.

We are immensely proud of our facility and also very thankful to all of the volunteers who have stepped up and willingly gave of their expertise and time to keep the club going year after year.

A big thank you to all!

Story written by Johanne Smith

Graphic supplied